

Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

**SB 554 Education Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - Appointment Process -
Alterations**

Bill Hearing Date: March 11th, 2026

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Izma Sheikh, and I am an 8th-grade student at Henderson Hopkins School in Baltimore City. Students like me may not yet be able to vote, but the decisions made by the Baltimore City School Board shape our education every day.

That is why it is so important that the process for selecting school board members includes the voices of the communities most affected by those decisions.

Currently, the Mayor must consult with a community panel when appointing members of the Baltimore City School Board. This panel includes stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students, and other community members. These engagement sessions are an important opportunity for stakeholders to share their perspectives about who should help oversee our school system.

Senate Bill 554 would remove this requirement. Without these engagement sessions, stakeholder groups may lose an important opportunity to have their voices heard in the process.

The bill would also require the Maryland State Senate to confirm Baltimore City School Board members. However, this does not replace the value of local input. No other school district

is required to undergo this state-level confirmation process. There is a clear difference between consulting the communities directly affected by school board decisions and seeking approval from a body further removed from those communities.

Baltimore's schools should be shaped by the voices of Baltimore's students, families, and educators. Removing community engagement from the appointment process risks moving decisions further away from the people most impacted by them.

For these reasons, I respectfully request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 554.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Izma Sheikh

izsheikh2019@gmail.com, 410-301-3902